

Congressman Blumenauer, who served on the House International Relations Committee until 2007, was an early and staunch opponent of the Iraq War.

Congressman Blumenauer voted against the Authorization for the Use of Military Force in Iraq and worked to block the war by prolonging and strengthening weapons inspections. Since 2003, he has opposed open-ended funding for the war in Iraq. A vocal critic of the lack of a strategy, he is also a recognized leader for his work to help the 4 million Iraqis who have been displaced as a result of the war in Iraq. Congressman Blumenauer does not support troop build up in Afghanistan and believes that more military presence is not an effective way to reduce terrorist threats to the United States.

Congressman Blumenauer is deeply grateful to all who serve in our armed forces, particularly the Oregon National Guard 41st Brigade serving in Iraq in 2009 and 2010. He continues to speak out to end US troop presence in Iraq, move forward in Afghanistan, invest in critical domestic and international priorities, and repair America's international image. He is a strong advocate for our troops and recognizes that the men and women serving in the armed services need and deserve top quality equipment and support to protect their health and safety and give peace of mind to their families.

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A Way Forward in Afghanistan

After the horrific events of September 11, 2001, Congressman Blumenauer voted to authorize force against the perpetrators of these attacks and the Taliban government that provided them safe haven in Afghanistan. As an advocate for a strategic and forceful United States response, the Congressman strongly opposed the Bush administration's abrupt shift to a tragic and open-ended war in Iraq. In addition to the thousands of lives lost and billions of dollars spent, the Iraq war drew resources and momentum away from more pressing threats, particularly the effort to stabilize Afghanistan.

Congressman Blumenauer welcomed President Obama's thorough review of how the U.S. can

and should operate in this complex region, and the unique challenges presented by the Afghan government, the opium industry, simmering ethnic and tribal rivalries, and the role of regional actors such as Pakistan. The way forward in Afghanistan must include deliberate review, engagement of our allies around the world, benchmarks, and an exit strategy. However, the Congressman continues to have concerns about the deployment of an additional 30,000 servicemen and women and our ability to deal with larger security and economic threats at home and abroad - from terrorist recruiting and nuclear weapons to unemployment and our budget deficit.

Congressman Blumenauer believes a successful security policy must employ a broad range of diplomatic and development tools to keep America safe in the long-term. In Afghanistan, he will continue to push for a U.S. strategy that defines realistic next steps for the region and does not simply focus on additional U.S. forces. There are no shortcuts to peace, stability, economic growth, and environmental protection. Congressman Blumenauer continues to advocate for renewed international commitment to and investments in efforts that help Afghan civilians, such as aid to civil society, democracy, anti-corruption efforts, education, health, water, sanitation, and projects to help rebuild the region.

Ending the War in Iraq

Congressman Blumenauer is committed to ending the war in Iraq and responsibly drawing down America's troops. He pledged to vote against every funding bill that does not end the war. In November 2005, Congressman Blumenauer unveiled [his own plan](#) to end the war and use diplomacy to help stabilize the country and provide for the needs of the Iraqi people. The Blumenauer Plan was highly praised by military experts and leading national security specialists (more information below).

Congressman Blumenauer supports the Obama administration's efforts to bring the conflict in Iraq to a responsible close. The U.S. is on track to end the combat mission in Iraq by August 2010, and remove all U.S. military forces by the end of 2011.

Congressman Blumenauer's bill, the "**New Direction for Iraq Act**," was introduced in 2007 and included the following provisions:

- **Redeployment:** Requires the responsible redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq to start within 30 days of passage and be completed within approximately one year.
- **Stops Escalation:** Prohibits the escalation of the Iraq War without specific Congressional approval.
- **Reconstruction:** Redirects U.S. reconstruction funding from large contractors to Iraqi owned businesses to help create jobs in Iraq.

- **Prosecutes War Profiteers:** Prompts Congress to investigate, and the Attorney General to aggressively prosecute, war profiteering and fraud and instructs the President to nullify contracts with any company that has not fulfilled an Iraq reconstruction contract and recover lost funds.
- **Diplomacy:** Directs the President to begin a regional diplomatic effort, including direct negotiations with Syria and Iran, to promote stability in Iraq and solve outstanding regional issues like nuclear proliferation and support for terrorism.
- **Benchmarks:** Requires the President and the Iraqi government to agree on performance benchmarks and makes further support for the Iraqi government contingent upon the achievement of those benchmarks.
- **Civil Society:** Authorizes additional funds for strengthening Iraqi civil society, including labor unions, environmental groups, and community organizations.
- **Refugees:** Requires the development of strategies to address the needs of Iraqi refugees.
- **No Permanent Bases:** Prohibits permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq, as well as U.S. control over Iraq's oil infrastructure and economic policies.

Addressing Iraq's Humanitarian Crisis

Congressman Blumenauer has led Congress to address the Iraqi refugee crisis. As the author of the “ [Responsibility to Iraqi Refugees Act](#) ,” provisions of which were signed into law in 2008, he is responsible for helping thousands of Iraqi refugees.

The ongoing violence in Iraq is marked by the world's fastest growing refugee and internally displaced populations – more than four million people, which is about the size of Los Angeles. Despite his opposition to the war in Iraq, Congressman Blumenauer believes that the United States has a responsibility to help all innocent Iraqis who are suffering as a result of the war, particularly those who are being targeted because they helped the United States. Many well-meaning Iraqis who either served as translators for the U.S. military or with humanitarian organizations have been targeted by Al Qaeda in Iraq, Sunni insurgents, or Shiite militias.

His legislation requires specific assistance to Iraqi refugees and the countries that are hosting them, making it easier for vulnerable Iraqis to come to the United States. The bill also establishes a special program to assist Iraqis who helped American efforts. As a result of the Congressman's efforts, tens of thousands of Iraqis and their families – who have served our country honorably – have escaped the threat of violent reprisal in Iraq. His efforts to help Iraqis continues, as this crisis is far from resolved.

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